

Public Health Update March 21, 2013

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## County health rankings

The fourth annual *County Health Rankings* (<a href="http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/">http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/</a>) were released yesterday. Rankings were completed in all 50 states. Counties were ranked within states only, with no comparison between states. The report helps identify factors that influence health in each county.

Although some of our counties have better health outcomes than others, it is important to note that overall Maine is one of the healthiest states in the nation, ranking ninth healthiest state in 2012 by the United Health Foundation's *America's Health Rankings* (<a href="http://www.americashealthrankings.org/me">http://www.americashealthrankings.org/me</a>).

## Women's health

The U.S. Office on Women's Health has released state by state fact sheets with snapshots of demographic characteristics and a variety of health status indicators for females within the area, such as:

- Health Status
- Access to Care
- Health Conditions and Risk Factors
- Preventive Services and Screenings
- Mortality
- Prenatal Care and Pregnancy Risk
- Birth Outcomes
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Violence and Abuse
- Mental Health and
- Teen Health

These fact sheets are available at: <a href="http://www.healthstatus2020.com/owh/factsheets.html">http://www.healthstatus2020.com/owh/factsheets.html</a>

## **Tuberculosis**

This Sunday, March 24, is World TB Day. Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the world's deadliest diseases. It's estimated that 2 billion people — one third of the people in the world — are infected with the bacteria that causes TB. Each year, nearly 9 million people in the world become sick with TB disease: in 2011 about 1.4 million deaths were attributed to TB. And while the number of TB cases in the United States has been declining since 1993, TB still is a life-threatening problem. Anyone can get TB, but there remains a higher-than-normal burden of TB among racial and ethnic minorities. This is due to unequal distribution of TB risk factors that can increase the chance of developing the disease.

World TB Day commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacillus that causes TB. This day is observed each year to raise awareness about TB-related problems and solutions and to support worldwide TB-control efforts. This year's theme is "Stop TB in my lifetime."

Visit Maine CDC's Tuberculosis Control Program at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2Efk">http://go.usa.gov/2Efk</a> to learn more.

## Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Maine CDC recognizes March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and encourages Mainers to talk with a health care provider about when and how to be tested for colorectal cancer.

The number of deaths from colorectal cancer and the number of new colorectal cancer cases diagnosed in Maine have been decreasing over the last decade due to screening and improvements in treatment. However, colorectal cancer still remains the second-leading cause of Maine cancer cases and deaths. While many people know that early detection of cancer is important to a positive long-term outcome, some cancers such as colorectal cancer (also referred to as colon cancer) can be prevented. Colorectal cancer starts as a polyp, which is a small collection of abnormal cells, in the colon or rectum. Polyps tend to grow slowly and can take many years before they become cancerous.

The recommended age to start screening is 50. There are three types of tests recommended for colorectal screening: the high-sensitivity fecal occult blood test or fecal immunochemical test (FIT) (annually); flexible sigmoidoscopy (every five years); and colonoscopy (every 10 years). For those younger than age 50 who have a family history of colorectal cancer, screening may start earlier.

It is important for people to talk with their health care provider about their risk for all cancers. Help is available for Maine residents who meet age, insurance coverage and income qualifications and are in need of breast, cervical or colorectal screening tests. The Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health and Colorectal Cancer Control Programs can provide information about cancer screening tests as well as resources for free cancer screenings.

Interested individuals are encouraged to call 1-800-350-5180 or 1-207-287-8068. TTY users should call Maine Relay at 711. Details can also be found at http://www.colonscreenme.org

## Salmonella

Salmonella infections don't just come from contaminated food—they can come from contact with animals, too. Many Salmonella infections occur in people who have contact with certain types of animals.

Traditional springtime activities may include purchasing baby chicks. It is important to know that even healthy-looking chicks may carry Salmonella.

Keep kids from getting sick by making sure they:

- Do not put their hands in their mouths after touching chicks
- Do not kiss chicks on their beak or feathers
- Do not handle or clean cages or food containers
- Do not eat or drink near baby chicks
- Do not put their mouths on objects that have been near chicks or their cages

Children younger than five should not handle baby chicks, but if they do, be sure you:

- Keep chicks out of the kitchen and other living areas
- Wash children's hands thoroughly with plenty of running water and soap after contact with chicks
- Contact your health care provider or go to a clinic if your child has diarrhea or vomiting

For more information, visit <a href="http://go.usa.gov/mZF">http://go.usa.gov/mZF</a> or see this infographic from US CDC: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2EMQ">http://go.usa.gov/2EMQ</a>

## Update on fungal infections

In the fall, a multistate outbreak of fungal meningitis and joint infections associated with contaminated steroid medications from the New England Compounding Center (NECC) in Framingham, Mass., made national news.

No Maine facilities received the contaminated lots of MPA, however small numbers of Maine residents received this medication in another state. Maine CDC issued a health alert on March 12 with information about the current status of the outbreak, recommendations for clinical management and follow-up of exposed patients, and information about new revisions to web-based interim clinical guidance.

For more information, see the health alert at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2Etk">http://go.usa.gov/2Etk</a> or review US CDC's interim clinical quidance at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2EJQ">http://go.usa.gov/2EJQ</a>

## **CRE**

Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) are untreatable or difficult-to-treat multidrug-resistant organisms that are emerging in the US. Because of increased reports of these multidrug-resistant organisms, US CDC is alerting clinicians about the need for additional prevention steps regarding CRE. Note that there are currently very few cases of CRE in Maine.

For more information, see this Vital Signs feature from US CDC at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2EtG">http://go.usa.gov/2EtG</a> or Maine CDC's health alert issued March 8 at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2Eeh">http://go.usa.gov/2Eeh</a>

#### Flu

Maine CDC reported sporadic flu activity for the week ending March 16. Weekly updates are available online:

• for Maine: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/NoK">http://go.usa.gov/NoK</a>

• for the US: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/ITB">http://go.usa.gov/ITB</a>

• for the world: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/ITK">http://go.usa.gov/ITK</a>

Up to date information is posted at www.maineflu.gov.

- Guidance and recommendations for health care providers: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/2Yxw">http://go.usa.gov/2Yxw</a>
- Information for the public: http://go.usa.gov/2Yxe

# Pertussis (whooping cough)

Reported cases of pertussis appear to be on a downward trend, but cases do continue to be reported.

DTaP vaccine is recommended for all infants and children. Tdap vaccine is recommended for all preteens, teens, and adults.

Maine CDC encourages health care providers to continue to follow guidelines from the July 31 health alert available at: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/Gob">http://go.usa.gov/Gob</a>.

For guidance and information, visit <a href="http://go.usa.gov/dCO">http://go.usa.gov/dCO</a>

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### Follow Maine CDC's Social Media Updates:

- Facebook (www.facebook.com/MaineCDC)
- Twitter (http://twitter.com/MEPublicHealth)
- Blog (http://mainepublichealth.blogspot.com)

You may subscribe to these updates for free through an RSS feed at <a href="http://go.usa.gov/G6u">http://go.usa.gov/G6u</a>. In Internet Explorer and Firefox, you will be prompted to Subscribe to the Feed and then select the folder where feeds are stored.

For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line: 1-800-821-5821

For questions and potential exposure to poison, call the Poison Center's 24-hour phone line: 1-800-222-1222